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President: Mr. Errázuriz (Vice-President) ..... (Chile)

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (E/2010/88-A/65/82)

Panel discussion

1. **The President** invited the Council to hold a panel discussion on "Strengthening preparedness for humanitarian emergencies and the coordinated provision of humanitarian assistance, in particular, addressing the humanitarian needs of the affected populations and the factors that increase susceptibility to humanitarian emergencies". He said that the choice of topic bore testimony to how global challenges were exacerbating the vulnerability of communities and how humanitarian needs should be addressed in contexts not necessarily labelled as humanitarian crises.

2. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that the humanitarian landscape was being shaped by profound and global challenges which included climate change, the food crisis, population growth, urbanization, scarcities of key resources such as land, water and energy, disturbances to ecosystems, the emergence of pandemics and the impact of the economic and financial crisis on the most vulnerable. Those challenges would constitute greater humanitarian burdens, often in unfamiliar developmental contexts, and would lead to chronic and acute vulnerability and needs on a scale that could not easily be imagined.

3. Existing vulnerabilities would become more severe, humanitarian caseloads would include unfamiliar groups, especially among such beneficiaries as the urban poor, and needs that coexisted with chronic underdevelopment would have to be identified. A new model would be required, not driven by shocks, events and triggers, that could identify tipping points and humanitarian needs in the absence of obvious causes. In the future there would be combined, multisectoral trends leading to new forms of vulnerabilities and needs.

4. A clearer approach was needed, with system-wide, multi-hazard indicators to facilitate better decisions. Better monitoring systems were needed to capture how the global trends were coming together and how they were increasing vulnerabilities. An overall system was needed that would focus not only on response but also on disaster reduction and prevention and, eventually, on exit strategies. To achieve that, there had to be better coordination with development partners in Governments and civil society to raise capacity and to analyse the trends in order to identify their effects on populations at risk.

5. Identifying humanitarian needs in what traditionally had been seen as development contexts was a sensitive matter: Governments were concerned by their image and their ability to attract investment and those sensitivities must be understood, just as it must be understood that humanitarian needs could arise anywhere. Work must be coordinated with Governments to develop responses that were both humanitarian and developmental in nature.

6. **Ms. Shaban** (Kenya), Minister of State for Special Programmes, said that the three main areas to be addressed were preparedness, coordination of humanitarian assistance, and post-emergency efforts, and that they must be studied together in order to tackle them and to understand how to enable people to return to normal lives. In all disasters, it was important for all stakeholders to be involved and for the Government to lead and coordinate to prevent duplication and to ensure accountability. In the case of the post-election violence in Kenya, there had been close coordination between the Government, United Nations agencies and civil-society organizations, with daily meetings and the immediate implementation of outcomes.

7. Situations before, during and after emergencies had to be studied together. Kenya had suffered several disasters, with economic, political and social impacts. The most severe ones had been caused by droughts, crop failures and floods, and their effects had been exacerbated by the presence of many refugees in the country. Those people brought their animals with them, overstretching pasture and leading to conflicts over land use.

8. Strengthening preparedness was not always easy. However, disasters related to climate were recurrent and as weather patterns became less predictable, they would have greater adverse effects. Climate change had resulted in abnormal conditions as shown by the drought and floods over the previous 12 months in

Kenya. Better disaster preparedness required more accurate prediction, a luxury Kenya did not have. There must be stronger early-warning mechanisms, particularly for droughts, because Kenya relied on rain-fed agriculture and suffered from fluctuations in commodity prices and hunger. To mitigate the adverse effects of climate-related emergencies, grain reserves had been expanded and improvements had been made to irrigation systems to improve food security. The population had been sensitized to the need to keep reserves ready, even after bumper harvests. The Government had built dams to retain water after flooding. Efforts had been made to reduce conflict among pastoral communities by reducing the distances travelled to water animals and by investing in agricultural diversification. People had been persuaded to move away from rivers and low-lying areas to avoid the risk of floods. Transport, communication and storage infrastructure had been improved.

9. Preparedness, prevention and contingency planning were critical for timely and effective responses and to build people's resilience to withstand emergencies. People were susceptible to humanitarian emergencies because of drought, poverty and underdevelopment, and poor food-productivity levels. The lack of market for local produce meant that there was little incentive to produce more, and everybody was growing the same crop at the same time.

10. There had been a lack of institutions to coordinate humanitarian assistance. After the fragmented response to the 1998 bomb attacks, the Ministry of State for Special Programmes had been created to coordinate the response of ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities. Efforts were coordinated at the local level, concentrating on disaster management, and seminars were held for local populations. Stronger relationships had been built with the United Nations, NGOs and the Red Cross.

11. The country had disaster-preparedness plans in place but needed better coordination. Unfortunately, the response to rains and droughts, where assessments were carried out with the World Food Programme and other actors, had been complicated because, as a result of climate change, normal flood patterns were not being followed. Access to resources had been a great obstacle. The Central Emergency Response Fund's efforts were welcome, but there must be adequate, flexible and sustainable resources during all phases of emergencies.

12. The Government of Kenya had worked to address the needs of affected populations during humanitarian disasters. It worked to establish priorities among food, water, shelter and security, and to create a semblance of normalcy by ensuring education for children through mobile schools. The Government bought livestock from pastoralists in dry years to sell for meat and transported water in tankers to follow communities and their animals. It repaired roads washed away by floods. Humanitarian assistance was provided by military personnel, aided by the National Youth Service and the police.

13. The standard of living of women and youth had been improved through an enterprise fund to promote entrepreneurship. Information on missing persons was continually provided through the media in the form of daily and weekly bulletins. To reduce susceptibility to disasters, drought-resistant cattle were being introduced. Diversification into other economic activities was being encouraged, especially in arid areas, with World Bank support.

14. Kenya was working to upgrade its coffee-research institute and extension services. It was working in water, reforestation and environmental-impact assessments. Various authorities had been sensitized to the humanitarian aspects of their work and training had been given in communities to ensure there were grass-roots first responders to disasters.

15. Numerous legal steps had been taken to prevent a repetition of the post-electoral violence of 2007. They included the creation of a new and independent electoral commission and a boundaries commission, and the adoption of policies on land and internally displaced persons.

16. **Mr. Jha** (Manager and Head, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), World Bank), accompanying his presentation with computerized files, said that reducing the risk of humanitarian emergencies was crucial for sustainable development, and poverty was extremely vulnerable to external shocks. A 2005 study on natural-disaster hotspots conducted by the World Bank, Columbia University and several other partners had revealed that 75 per cent of disaster hotspots in the world were populated by persons living in moderate and extreme

poverty, and one third of the world's poor lived in those hotspots.

17. In addressing development, it was important to look at how the vulnerability of poor people to external shocks, including natural hazards, was managed, as the human and economic consequences were often massive. The economic impact of both the Samoa tsunami of 2009 and the Haiti earthquake of 2010, for example, had been 120 per cent of each country's gross domestic product. Moreover, according to the World Bank, the average loss of employment worldwide due to natural disasters was about 4 to 5 per cent each year, and the earthquake in Haiti had caused job losses at an estimated 8.5 per cent. If vulnerabilities were not managed as part of development planning, such disasters would continue to have a devastating impact on vulnerable communities.

18. In order to be better prepared to address emergency situations in the future, development and humanitarian actors needed to bear in mind that poverty estimates for countries tended to be static, without factoring in changing conditions or uncertain events to which people were exposed. The actual percentage of people below the poverty line was much higher than it seemed. It would thus be useful to analyse how certain events might affect a given country's poverty outcomes, as it was found, for example, that many countries prone to earthquakes of a magnitude of 6 or above on the Richter scale were unlikely to achieve their poverty-reduction or national development goals in a five-year planning cycle.

19. Thus, growth and poverty alleviation could only be sustainable if vulnerabilities and risk management were taken into account in national-development and poverty-reduction strategies as well as in reconstruction efforts. The philosophy of "building back better" should instead follow the notion of "building better in the first place", as it was crucial to move from a shock-driven to a needs-based approach. In that respect, it was encouraging that an increasing number of Governments had been requesting funding for preparedness and prevention.

20. He provided an overview of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, which had been established at a 2006 meeting with donors, United Nations agencies and the World Bank as a multi-donor programme to provide technical and financial assistance to countries in need, and to look at a few priority disaster-hotspot countries. The goal was to demonstrate change in 20 countries over the coming three to four years. The Facility's efforts included getting the issues of risk-reduction and recovery into policy discussions in connection with disaster-prone countries, conducting post-disaster needs assessments and looking at the cost-benefit element of disaster-risk reduction. In cases where only a small amount of funding was available for prevention, priority should be given to setting up an early-warning system, which was emerging as the most economical disaster-risk-reduction action. The Facility aimed to include risk reduction as an integral component in poverty-reduction strategies. It also aimed to influence the World Bank's investment structure with a view to "disaster-proofing" investments in the relevant countries. In that respect, it was encouraging to note that an increasing number of countries had been including risk reduction in their national strategies.

21. **Ms. Mahmood** (Chief, Humanitarian Response Branch, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that to predict, identify and respond to acute humanitarian needs, it was crucial to look at data, needs and demography on the one hand and communication on the other. On the first aspect, she noted that access to good data was a component of good governance, transparency and accountability, and population data helped leaders and policymakers to make informed decisions. Good data was also needed in order to respond to humanitarian crises, and demographic patterns could serve as triggers to alert Governments and development and humanitarian actors.

22. Various demographic factors increased susceptibility to humanitarian emergencies. For example, high population density and sustained high growth in areas where natural resources were scarce could lead to displacement and conflict; high rural-urban migration to areas with scarce jobs and social services could lead to increased levels of congestion and crime; unequal spatial population distribution in areas at risk of natural disasters was problematic. Moreover, countries where most of the rural population was dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture and animal breeding could be vulnerable during prolonged periods of drought, unleash waves of migration to other parts of the country and provoke conflict relating to land and ethnicity.

23. Sex- and age-disaggregated data was useful in helping to ensure the needs of women, young people and the elderly, especially after a disaster. The elderly were one of the most vulnerable groups in the crisis in Haiti, for example, yet little had been heard about their special needs. Also, the scarcity and unreliability of data on internally displaced persons was a key impediment to the response to that crisis.

24. Development and humanitarian actors needed to engage with developmental agencies, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had expertise and worked closely with national authorities, and had held the only remaining database containing sex- and age-disaggregated data after the earthquake in Haiti. UNFPA had drawn up Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations to help replicate that experience and strengthen national capacities, including through a "training of trainers" approach.

25. Post-disaster communication was the second area that required attention, and had been a major gap in aid agencies' strategies for too long. Without access to information — knowing whether a loved one was safe or where to go for water — disaster survivors could not begin to make the right choices for themselves and their families. Better communication was also needed to reach out to marginalized communities such as indigenous populations, as survivors often did not know their rights. In such contexts, radio, the Internet and mobile telephones, the growth of which was faster in the developing than in the developed world, were important vehicles.

26. Likewise, humanitarian agencies needed feedback from beneficiaries so that response could be improved. The response to the earthquake in Haiti had provided a glimpse of the future of disaster response and of communications environments, where even the poorest and most isolated people could connect to millions through the phone in their pocket. Real-time communication channels could revolutionize the way humanitarian agencies did business and address some long-term vulnerabilities, and could be a true melding of business and the humanitarian and development communities.

27. Rather than allow new and emerging technologies to shore up existing communications systems, it was time to think about establishing a two-way flow of information; the establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) was a first step in that direction. However, much more was needed, including engagement, debate, the establishment of a modus operandi and means to regulate the way in which the aid community used technology. Technologies and tools needed not only to be relevant to the response-based humanitarian system already in place, but also to be focused on national and regional authorities as the first line of preparedness, which should emphasize prevention and risk reduction at least as much as response. New partnerships must be created among public authorities, civil society and business, focusing on building resilience at every level, to reduce the risks of natural hazards.

28. The information-technology community was willing and able to work with aid agencies, including Ushahidi and Crisis Commons. The interaction between the technology companies and aid agencies needed to be visionary, reliable, predictable, principled and cognizant of humanitarian principles, and jointly focused on achieving true change in the way business was conducted; otherwise, humanitarian agencies would be left behind. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) needed to take a lead in that regard, and needed the resources to be able to do so.

29. **Mr. Walker** (Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and Director, Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University) said that, while there was a great deal of financial data available with regard to humanitarian assistance, aggregated data on how many people humanitarian systems sought to assist were woefully inadequate. It was also unclear if those targeted by humanitarian-assistance programmes represented a large or a small percentage of the total number of people requiring assistance. Without such information, humanitarian-assistance systems became driven by financial data and not by human data. Moreover, it was estimated that there were approximately 500,000 aid workers worldwide, of whom 210,000 worked in the humanitarian business. However those figures were little more than guesswork based on the financial data available. Without data on how many people were working in the system and how long they had been working there, it was impossible to know if they needed training or if they were effective.

30. The nature of disasters was changing. Most responses to crises focused on meeting people's needs.

However, such needs were often confused with the losses suffered by people in crises. Furthermore, since crises were becoming more chronic in nature, greater focus needed to be placed on addressing people's hopes for the future once those needs to survive had been met. Better data was needed to accurately assess the hopes and aspirations of people affected by crises in order to help them recover and build a better future for themselves.

31. If the humanitarian-assistance field was to become more data driven and nuanced, greater professionalism was required. In a recent survey of people working in that field, 80 per cent of those questioned said that the system needed to become more professional. They believed that skills required by professional humanitarian workers included the ability to multitask, to build teams and to make decisions based on minimal information in a rapidly changing environment. Moreover, key values such as impartiality and independence as well as hands-on experience were all vital.

32. It was hoped that, based on improved data, a type of global humanitarian association could be established. That association would certify individuals' competences as humanitarian workers within the framework of a universally recognized system and would deliver training worldwide. That would serve the humanitarian community and facilitate the delivery of independent effective and accountable aid. The humanitarian community was much broader than some imagined and many diverse organizations were involved in dealing with crises. Those included, inter alia, local community-based organizations and municipalities, mega-churches, Islamic organizations and organizations collecting remittances from abroad. In order to estimate how many people were involved in humanitarian work, better data collection was essential.

33. There was no longer a sharp distinction between development and relief work since many crises were chronic in nature. Over 40 per cent of humanitarian assistance was spent on programmes which had been ongoing for over eight years and that figure had been growing. People targeted by such programmes were kept in a situation where they were neither just surviving, nor had the opportunity to move forward. Such people included many internally displaced persons and refugees, pastoralists and families in shanty towns who did not receive remittances. Whether some Haitians would face a similar situation in five years' time remained to be seen. Greater professionalism was required so that the humanitarian system was fit for the purpose. It should aim not only to keep people alive but allow them the opportunity to "build back better" and move on to sustainable livelihoods.

34. **Mr. Thomas** (Director, Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that, according to recent global trends, those working in the humanitarian field needed to be better prepared for humanitarian crises, to work harder to prevent such crises from occurring and, if they did occur, to safeguard and restore survivors' means of survival. It was possible to predict most humanitarian crises and emergencies and their impact on vulnerable populations. Moreover, many crises were chronic in nature; recent data collected by FAO had revealed that over half of the 23 countries facing chronic food crises had been doing so for over 10 years. The severity of humanitarian crises depended on the vulnerability of populations and systems before shocks occurred and on their resilience to absorb such shocks. That was particularly true of food insecurity, which often resulted from humanitarian crises. However, food riots in 2008 had shown that food insecurity could also give rise to such crises.

35. Extreme vulnerability was a potential source of destabilization and a threat to peace and security. Responses to crises needed to be substantial, immediate and sustainable; must better integrate preparedness, warning systems, vulnerability assessments, prevention and transitional measures; and must integrate risk and disaster-management concepts. Responses must aim not only to save lives but also to restore livelihoods and address root causes, thus strengthening populations' resilience and helping them develop their own survival strategies. Furthermore, it was important to build Member States' capacities to respond to humanitarian crises. In that connection, the approach of the Kenyan Government was to be commended.

36. Approximately 45 per cent of the population of the Horn of Africa continued to live in abject poverty. Increased vulnerability as a result of recurrent crises and population growth had given rise to chronic food insecurity. A similar crisis was unfolding in Niger, Chad, Mali, Burkino Faso and northern Nigeria. In June 2010, an annual survey by the Nigerian

Government had revealed that 16.7 per cent of Nigerian children under five were suffering from acute malnutrition; any figure over 15 per cent was considered an emergency. Meanwhile, 2 million people in Chad had been affected by the food crisis and 1 million faced severe food insecurity. At the same time, farmers and pastoralists across the region were competing more fiercely for access to resources and land.

37. In Haiti, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO had assisted small-scale farmers in testing and distributing a new variety of black bean which reached maturity faster and required less water and consequently reduced risk for farmers. Such an approach was being replicated by FAO and its partners in storm-prone areas such as the Caribbean and drought-prone areas such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, where FAO was working with national and regional partners to improve pastoralists' resilience by, inter alia, improving water harvests and providing access to veterinary services and microcredit. Efforts by Governments in East Africa to increase investment in agriculture needed to be supported. Furthermore, FAO was working with communities in the Niger to rehabilitate pastoral land and facilitate access to agricultural inputs and credit by establishing village cooperatives. In the Sahel region, there was now an effective regional alert system and, within the framework of the European Union Food Facility, FAO was working with national research institutions in Burkino Faso and the Niger to develop and disseminate drought-resistant short-cycle seeds and high-yield crops.

38. Preventing crises from occurring was also vital. In 2008 and 2009, locusts had threatened the livelihoods of 15 million people in parts of Africa. However, effective early-warning systems had ensured that affected areas had been treated, crops saved and a humanitarian catastrophe averted. Madagascar's food security was also threatened by locusts. To avert disaster, 500,000 square kilometres of crops needed to be treated. Modest resources committed now would prevent the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars of production later and would avert a major food crisis.

39. Emergency strategies built around preparation and disaster-risk management were an integral part of the new strategic framework of FAO. Emergency responses alone were insufficient. Chronic vulnerability and the impact of multiple hazards on the lives of people needed to be assessed and the underlying factors which contributed to crises needed to be addressed at the same time and with the same urgency as vital short-term needs. Coherent strategies with financial partners were also of great importance and links needed to be established between budgetary lines and those working on emergency and development issues.

40. **Mr. Laroche** (Assistant Director-General, Health Action in Crises, World Health Organization (WHO)) said that the first responders in an emergency were always local people. After floods had occurred in Myanmar, data revealed that 95 per cent of the health-related response had been by local communities. Moreover, although communicable diseases were often considered paramount, data showed that non-communicable and chronic diseases represented 80 per cent of the health-related burden in low- and middle-income countries. Responses and actions needed to be more data-driven. However a meta-analysis by the WHO Health and Nutrition Tracking Service revealed that only 30 per cent of all nutrition surveys carried out over the previous 10 years had been accurate. Moreover, only 1 per cent of maternal-mortality studies in emergency situations were valid. Such low rates were due not only to inadequate training but also to the difficulty of gathering accurate data. If good data was collected, there was need for an appropriate response and for funding to address identified needs. A 1992 study had revealed that a region in Afghanistan had the highest ever recorded rates of maternal mortality. However, three years later no funding had yet been provided for maternal-mortality programmes.

41. In 2007, WHO had carried out a global assessment of preparedness and response among all the agencies involved in health. That assessment had revealed that, although half of all States had faced at least one major disaster in the previous five years, less than 50 per cent of States had earmarked a budget for preparedness and response. Appropriate structures were also required in order to ensure that an adequate response could be implemented. Preparation would remain difficult if so few countries had an appropriate budget for responses. However, preparedness by low- and middle-income countries was possible. In Bangladesh in 1971, half a million people had died as a result of floods. Bangladesh had strengthened its preparedness by, inter alia, establishing one of the best

cholera hospitals in the world, and floods now resulted in far fewer deaths. It was necessary to stop seeing people as problems. Instead they were the key to solving their problems.

42. In China, health responses had been very impressive: according to the Chinese Minister of Health, during the response to the Sichuan earthquake, China had used systems developed during that country's severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) crisis, thus demonstrating that preparedness was strongly linked to establishing adequate structures and systems and was not hazard-specific. Similarly, following the 1985 earthquake, Mexico had developed a matrix to assess vulnerability, set budget priorities and evaluate the safety of hospitals. In an emergency, it was vital that hospitals were structurally sound and had the capacity to deal with a huge surge of illness and injuries. In that regard, WHO, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and the International Federation of the Red Cross, had implemented the Safe Hospital Initiative.

43. The nature of emergency responses was also changing: clusters had been established and a thematic platform for health had been drawn up in order to bring together those active in the health field, as well as engineers, planners, municipality actors, policymakers and architects, with a view to addressing health-related issues and strengthening capacities. Collaborative efforts were needed to ensure that all stakeholders, including, governmental institutions, community-based NGOs and the United Nations system worked effectively together. When a comprehensive action plan on malnutrition was drawn up for a State, the United Nations Development Action Framework should be revised with a view to addressing the root causes of problems. In that regard, WHO issued a risk-analysis framework for every State so that stakeholders knew what needed to be done and what was not required.

44. Although the recent events in Haiti had mobilized the capacity and the compassion of the world, humanitarian efforts there had suffered from inadequate coordination due to the huge number of agencies involved. There had been 384 agencies working in the health field alone. It was not possible to meet people's needs without involving the most skilled and experienced actors in the humanitarian emergency field; without the necessary skills and back up, humanitarian workers could cause more harm than good.

Question-and-answer session

45. **Mr. Bonser** (Canada) said that the private sector represented an untapped resource from a humanitarian perspective, particularly in the area of communications technology. The international community therefore needed to consider how better to share best practices in the development of private-sector partnerships. Canada's experience was that the private sector had been very willing to offer help following the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile but had not known how to become involved. Since it was too late to make the initial contacts at a time of crisis, relationships needed to be established much earlier.

46. Secondly, while data collection was indeed often inadequate, the report of the Secretary-General (E/2010/88-A/65/82) contained some good examples of monitoring, mapping and data collection, including the OCHA Global Focus Model and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping unit of the World Food Programme (WFP). He would like to know the extent to which good data analysis was systematically shared among agencies, both within and outside the United Nations system, and the extent to which such data was shared with host Governments, especially in natural-disaster settings.

47. **Ms. Lee** Sorie (Republic of Korea) said that she concurred with the comments made by the representative of Canada. In view of the vicious circle of natural disasters and poverty, as well as the importance of incorporating a long-term development perspective in the response to humanitarian emergencies, it was important to forge closer links between disaster-risk reduction and development efforts. In that connection, her delegation believed that more tangible partnerships should be developed among various actors, including the private sector. Better collaboration had already been achieved among the United Nations system, Governments and NGOs, but the humanitarian community needed to work on building such partnerships with more development-oriented organizations; she would like to know how the panellists thought that could be achieved.

48. **Mr. Lallemand-Zeller** (Observer for the European Union) asked what the role of humanitarian actors would be in responding to the cyclical or slower-onset crises that seemed likely to emerge in the future; what, for example, was the relationship between humanitarian action and social safety nets? Secondly,

as humanitarian action became more closely linked with long-term development approaches, he wondered whether humanitarian actors needed to take additional methods or principles into account. Thirdly, he would be interested to know whether the panellists considered that future trends in humanitarian action would have consequences for the current humanitarian architecture, built around national authorities, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs. Lastly, he would like to know what progress had been made on the new Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS) and whether it was already delivering information that could be of operational assistance to decision-makers when tracking vulnerabilities.

49. **Ms. Mahmood** (Chief, Humanitarian Response Branch, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the corporate sector had been directly involved in emergency response in a number of countries, including Myanmar, and many United Nations agencies were already working in partnership with private companies; however, it was certainly important to find a platform for sharing best practices in that regard. The outcome of a two-year programme being conducted by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) in Haiti, with funding from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), to examine such partnerships and how they could be expanded, would provide further useful information. UNDP was also studying the role of the corporate sector in recovery and development. All the available information now needed to be brought together in order to determine how to move forward.

50. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that the humanitarian community, in developing partnerships with the private sector, also needed to invest time and money since such partnerships could not be built without resources and long-term commitment.

51. **Mr. Thomas** (Director, Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division, FAO) said that there were many examples of good practice in the area of data collection. Two such examples were the crop and food supply assessment missions carried out jointly by FAO and WFP using data from both GIVAS and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping unit of WFP; and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, which provided a real-time assessment of population vulnerabilities in different subregions of a given country. It was important now to consolidate the various systems and improve the sharing of information between them.

52. **Mr. Jha** (Manager and Head, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), World Bank), noting that the traditional means of collecting, storing and analysing data were no longer sufficient, said that greater use should be made of geospatial information systems, as well as satellite and space-based applications. Open-source data systems would also become increasingly important; open street mapping had, for example, been used following the earthquake in Haiti.

53. With regard to collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, the case for disaster-risk reduction to be part of development action was largely being made by humanitarian actors. Although the engagement of many United Nations development agencies and multilateral development banks had increased over the past two years, that concept was not yet fully mainstreamed in the development community. The distinction between humanitarian and development action disappeared, however, at the Government level, since both longer-term development issues and shorter-term humanitarian responses were taken into account in country-planning processes. At the international level, it would be preferable if the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) served as the platform for discussion on the issue among the various actors; at the donor level, GFDRR should fulfil that function.

54. **Mr. Walker** (Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and Director, Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University) said it was more important to ensure that the humanitarian system was moving in the right direction than to define the exact connections between the various agencies. In that regard, the humanitarian architecture should be seen as an open system that welcomed new actors; it should engage in continuous dialogue about its purpose, so as to clarify which components should be incorporated; it should establish and improve mechanisms for measuring and ensuring the quality of its work; and it should make greater use of open-source types of

information, which were breaking down the barriers between assisting and assisted populations.

55. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that he saw a difference between the architecture at the global level — which was very humanitarian-focused, owing to the predominance of humanitarian actors — and the humanitarian country teams at the local level, where the involvement of Governments and donors resulted in a somewhat wider and more open community.

56. **Ms. Shaban** (Kenya, Minister of State for Special Programmes) said that time was often wasted in emergency situations as the various humanitarian actors struggled to reach agreement on how to work together and competed to assume a leading role. Where a Government was in place, it should therefore take the lead in coordinating the humanitarian response, while the various agencies should work together as a team with common goals, sharing information on a daily basis. Kenya had created systems and institutions to prepare for emergencies, and was able to move quickly in response even to minor situations. It had also established a food-security group that met biannually, or more frequently if required.

57. Communication was a very important part of the humanitarian response. Mobile telephony offered considerable advantages and, in Kenya, the M-PESA system was a highly effective method of transferring money via mobile phone to people in need. The Government also used local FM radio stations to issue flood warnings and monitor flood levels using specialized equipment. Faced with two consecutive seasons of particularly heavy rain, it had pre-positioned food and non-food items as a safety net to reduce the suffering of displaced persons and had avoided deaths by moving people to higher ground.

58. **Mr. Laroche** (Assistant Director-General for Health Action in Crises, WHO) said that, in view of the closer links that now existed between humanitarian action and longer-term development approaches, it would be advisable to move from annual to multi-year consolidated-appeals-process funding, in order to ensure continuity when embarking on urgent humanitarian measures with long-term consequences. For example, if a child was sent to school as part of an urgent humanitarian response, it was important to ensure that he or she could remain at school the following year.

59. Closer links should also be forged between the various humanitarian actors in a given situation. In Haiti, for example, there was a lack of information about the programmes being run by different NGOs, including the budgets they required in order to continue their activities the following year. The cluster system should provide the means for closer collaboration between the various actors. Furthermore, although a mid- and long-term perspective was critical when taking humanitarian action, the response was in reality often short-sighted and risked compounding the reasons for the disaster. The recovery cluster should facilitate the adoption of a longer-term perspective. Thirdly, the coordination systems established for humanitarian action should also be appropriate to the transition to development. At present, such coordination systems were often fragmented and did not facilitate continuity between humanitarian and development activities. Lastly, it was important to remember that no recovery or development process could be initiated in the absence of hope at the political and individual level; such a process could not be forced.

60. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that the possibility of combining short- and long-term financing was being explored in the case of Kenya, which faced both short- and long-term problems. GIVAS, which sought to integrate information from existing sources in ways that would be particularly helpful for actors on the ground, was already operational, although it was not yet producing full results.

61. **Mr. Byman** (Observer for Sweden) asked how the various United Nations agencies represented on the panel could work to promote the integration of disaster-risk reduction within the development agenda and persuade development actors to take the lead.

62. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that, while all the panellists had made very helpful presentations, they had failed to highlight the role of local government, which performed a very important function in Bangladesh, and had largely ignored the potential of South-South cooperation. There appeared to be a governance deficit in GFDRR, since vulnerable countries were not reflected in its Consultative Group.

Lastly, it was critical that data should be disaggregated, including by gender, in order for vulnerabilities to be correctly identified.

63. **Ms. Mahmood** (Chief, Humanitarian Response Branch, UNFPA) said that, as a development agency, UNFPA was working to mainstream emergency preparedness and humanitarian response into its programme development. It was also providing input for the Hyogo Framework for Action mid-term review in such areas as gender policy, capacity-building and the strengthening of health facilities, and was working with WHO on sustainable recovery from disasters. South-South cooperation was extremely important; in that connection, Bangladesh was a prime example of a country able to share its expertise and experience of disaster-risk reduction.

64. **Ms. Shaban** (Kenya, Minister of State for Special Programmes) said that, in Kenya, district steering groups, which incorporated all the various stakeholders, including drought management, water and agricultural officers, local-government representatives and the district commissioner, implemented the decisions taken at national level. Local governments played a very valuable role as the first responders in a crisis and as providers of data to the national Government. Partnerships were also very important in finding practical solutions to problems and much could be learned from best practices in other countries. Her Government was, for example, looking to benefit from the experience of Bangladesh in the area of flood management.

65. Most Governments in developing countries did not allocate enough funding to disaster-risk reduction and were over-dependent on their development partners in that regard. The way forward was for Governments themselves to allocate more funds to disaster-risk reduction in order to ensure that the relevant policies were implemented more rapidly.

66. **Mr. Jha** (Manager and Head, GFDRR, World Bank), referring to the integration of disaster-risk reduction within the development agenda, said that the United Nations system was working with a number of partners, including Member States, regional development banks and international financial institutions, to that end. A programme had been initiated within the United Nations system to examine how the different agencies would incorporate disaster-risk reduction in their multi-year assistance programmes in priority countries, through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and cooperation was ongoing with the European Commission with a view to disaster-risk reduction being included in the Commission's country strategy papers.

67. Following recent governance reform of GFDRR, six developing countries were now full members of its Consultative Group. GFDRR also had a very strong South-South cooperation programme, which allowed Governments to seek funding in order to learn from the experiences of other Southern countries in such areas as new-tool development or policy formulation.

68. **Mr. Thomas** (Director, Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division, FAO) said that FAO was mainstreaming disaster-risk reduction as part of its new strategic framework, which included a strategic objective of improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies. FAO would be accountable to its members not only for its own progress in delivering results but also for its work in strengthening the capacity of its members and partners to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.